

## Secretary of Defense

By Meg Leonard

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The Department of Defense is part of our country's government. It is in the executive branch. The head of this department is called the Secretary of Defense. This person is chosen by the president. The Senate has to agree with the president's decision. If this happens, then the person can take office. This department was established in 1947. It replaced two other departments. They were the Department of War and the Department of the Navy. The Department of War was established in 1789. The Department of the Navy was established in 1798. The departments were joined so that they would not compete with each other. The idea was for all branches of the military to work together.

The Department of Defense provides the military forces needed to discourage war. It protects the security of our country. It is made up of the Departments of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps. It is the largest government agency. About 1.3 million men and women serve on active duty. Almost 700,000 civilians also serve. About 1.1 million people serve in the National Guard and Reserve. The Department of Defense protects our national interests. Sometimes, this means going to war with another country. This department also provides humanitarian aid. It works to keep peace between nations. It is involved with disaster relief.



The Secretary of Defense is the president's top defense policy adviser. He or she is responsible for creating general defense policies. Sometimes, a crisis will arise. The Secretary of Defense is responsible for creating policies for these situations, too. He or she carries out these policies. He or she is a member of the president's cabinet and the National Security Council. The safety of our country rests in the care of the Department of Defense.

Secretary of Defense

## Questions

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- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. What branch of government includes the Department of Defense?
- A. legislative
  - B. executive
  - C. judicial
  - D. none of the above
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Which two departments were joined to create the Department of Defense?
- A. Departments of War and Air Force
  - B. Departments of War and Army
  - C. Departments of War and Navy
  - D. Departments of Army and Navy
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Which of the following is NOT a responsibility of the Department of Defense?
- A. humanitarian aid
  - B. peacekeeping
  - C. discouraging war
  - D. local police departments

Name \_\_\_\_\_



Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. The Department of Defense \_\_\_\_\_ our national interests.

- A. protects
- B. interferes with
- C. has nothing to do with
- D. destroys

5. List four departments within the Department of Defense.

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**Would you like to work for the Department of Defense? Why or why not?**

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**Write a story about a peacekeeping mission. How do the troops try to keep the peace?**

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